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C O N F I D E N T I A L HAVANA 000689

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: CUBA DENOUNCES U.S. INTERFERENCE IN BLOGGER CASE

REF: A. REF: A) HAVANA 684 ("BLOGGERS BEATEN")
[1](#)B. B) CCA TO USINT EMAIL 11/9/09
[1](#)C. C) HAVANA 592 ("GOC SIGNALS READINESS")

Classified By: Principal Office Jonathan Farrar for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) On November 10, 2009, COM Jonathan Farrar delivered a demarche to Josefina Vidal Ferreiro, Director of the North American Department of the Ministry of External Relations (MINREX), regarding the November 6 detention and abuse of three prominent Cuban bloggers (Ref A). Pursuant to Reftel B, COM made the following points:

--We are very concerned about the alleged assaults.

--We are especially concerned since the actions involve one of the bloggers, Yoani Sanchez, that acting DAS Bisa Williams met with during her September visit (Ref C). If the detentions and abuse were a reprisal for that meeting, it would impact our relations.

--We call on the GOC for an immediate investigation and to take adequate measures against those responsible.

--It is important for GOC to show publicly to the international community that it does not tolerate abuse or intimidation of domestic critics.

--Without these steps, our capacity to carry forward our agenda will be very limited.

--Although the US does not prejudge the results of an investigation, it would be very negative if GOC does not respond constructively in this case.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Ms. Vidal responded by reading the following "Non Paper" (USINT translation):

&The Ministry of External Relations of the Republic of Cuba energetically rejects the slanderous implications contained in the statement about Cuba, from Department of State spokesman Ian Kelly on November 9, 2009, which constitute a gross interference in Cuban internal affairs.⁸

[1](#)3. (C) Vidal went on to say that the United States was reacting hastily and without evidence, and should not have issued a statement without the facts. She denied that the GOC would ever act in such a manner. She claimed that the GOC had not known of DAS Williams' meeting with Sanchez. The COM responded that DAS Williams had directly informed Vice Foreign Minister Dagoberto Rodriguez in advance about the planned meeting. COM then asked if Vidal's statement that the assault had never taken place meant that the GOC had already conducted an investigation. Vidal was non-responsive, and asked that we report to Washington the contents of the GOC's non-paper response.
FARRAR